

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 3, 7 to 9 and 11 to 14 without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, add new Claims 16 and 17 and amend the claims as shown below. The claims, as pending in the subject application, read as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An information service apparatus which comprises display means for displaying text information, text-to-speech synthesis means for executing a text-to-speech synthesis process on the basis of ~~and can be connected to an~~ audio output device that can output speech information corresponding to the text information to generate synthetic speech, and audio output means that can output the synthetic speech, comprising:

storage means that stores a list of IDs of external devices that are each located in a private space;

acquisition means that acquires, from an external device in which communication between the information service apparatus and the external device is in progress, the ID of the external device;

determination means for determining that determines whether or not the acquired ID of the external device is stored in the list of the storage means ~~if the audio output device is connected;~~ and

switching control means ~~[[for]] that controls said text-to-speech synthesis means to generate the synthetic speech and then making output the generated synthetic speech~~ destination-switching control that outputs the speech information corresponding to the text information to the audio output device when said determination means if said

~~determination means determines that the acquired ID of the external device is stored in the list, or controls said determines that the audio output device is connected, and outputs the text information to the display means to display the text information if said determination means determines that the acquired ID of the external device is not stored in the list when said determination means determines that the audio output device is not connected.~~

2. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

exchange means for exchanging information with ~~[[an]]~~ the external apparatus via a network, ~~and~~

~~in that wherein~~ the text information is ~~information which is~~ received by the exchange means from the external apparatus via the network, and the text information includes mail information and Web information.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim ~~[[3]]~~ 1, further comprising:

notification means for, when the synthetic speech generated by said text-to-speech synthesis means is to be output to the audio output device or when the text information is to be output to the display means, notifying the user of ~~[[an]]~~ the impending output ~~in a corresponding case.~~

5. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim [[3]] 1, further comprising:

superposing means for superposing the synthetic speech generated by said text-to-speech synthesis means and a sound different from the synthetic speech, and

~~in that wherein~~ when the audio output device has already output [[a]] the sound before the output of the synthetic speech, said superposing means superposes the synthetic speech with the sound, and the audio output device outputs the sound superposed with the synthetic speech.

6. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim [[3]] 1, wherein when said ~~switching~~ control means ~~makes~~ controls said text-to-speech synthesis means to output that outputs the synthetic speech ~~generated by said text-to-speech synthesis means~~ to the audio output device, said ~~switching~~ control means ~~further makes~~ also controls said display means to display that outputs the text information ~~to the display means~~.

7. to 9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently Amended) An information service method ~~to be~~ executed by an information service apparatus which comprises display means for displaying text information, text-to-speech synthesis means for executing a text-to-speech synthesis process on the basis of and ~~can be connected to an audio output device that can output speech information corresponding to~~ the text information to generate synthetic speech, and audio output means that can output the synthetic speech, comprising:

a storage step of storing in a storage means a list of IDs of external devices that are each located in a private space;

an acquisition step of acquiring, from an external device in which communication between the information service apparatus and the external device is in progress, the ID of the external device;

a determination step of determining whether or not the acquired ID of the external device is stored in the list of the storage means if the audio output device is connected; and

a switching control step of controlling said text-to-speech synthesis means to generate the synthetic speech and then making output the generated synthetic speech destination switching control that outputs the speech information corresponding to the text information to the audio output device when it is determined in the determination step if said determination step determines that the acquired ID of the external device is stored in the list, or controlling said that the audio output device is connected, and outputs the text information to the display means to display the text information if said determination step determines that the acquired ID of the external device is not stored in the list when it is determined in the determination step that the audio output device is not connected.

11. and 14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended) A computer readable storage medium on which is stored a computer-executable storing a program of claim 13 that when, executed by an information service apparatus which comprises display means for displaying text

information, text-to-speech synthesis means for executing a text-to-speech synthesis process on the basis of the text information to generate synthetic speech, and audio output means that can output the synthetic speech, performs the steps of:

a storage step of storing in a storage means a list of IDs of external devices that are each located in a private space;

an acquisition step of acquiring, from an external device in which communication between the information service apparatus and the external device is in progress, the ID of the external device;

a determination step of determining whether or not the acquired ID of the external device is stored in the list of the storage means; and

a control step of controlling said text-to-speech synthesis means to generate the synthetic speech and then output the generated synthetic speech to the audio output device if said determination step determines that the acquired ID of the external device is stored in the list, or controlling said display means to display the text information if said determination step determines that the acquired ID of the external device is not stored in the list.

16. (New) An information service apparatus which comprises display means for displaying text information, text-to-speech synthesis means for executing a text-to-speech synthesis process on the basis of the text information to generate synthetic speech, and audio output means that can output the synthetic speech, comprising:

storage means that stores a list of IDs of external devices that are each located in a private space;

acquisition means that acquires, from an external device in which communication between the information service apparatus and the external device is in progress, the ID of the external device;

determination means that determines whether or not the acquired ID of the external device is stored in the list of the storage means;

control means that controls said text-to-speech synthesis means to generate the synthetic speech and then output the generated synthetic speech to the audio output means if the determination means determines that the acquired ID of the external device is stored in the list, or controls said display means to display the text information if the determination means determines that the acquired ID of the external device is not stored in the list;

notification means that, when the synthetic speech generated by said text-to-speech synthesis means is to be output to the audio output device, or when the text information is to be output to the display means, notifies the user of the impending output; and

superposing means that superposes the synthetic speech generated by said text-to-speech synthesis means and a sound different from the synthetic speech,

wherein, when the audio output device has already output the sound before the output of the synthetic speech, said superposing means superposes the synthetic speech with the sound, and the audio output device outputs the sound superposed with the synthetic speech.

17. (New) A method for an information service apparatus which comprises a display means for displaying text information, text-to-speech synthesis means for executing a text-to-speech synthesis process on the basis of the text information to generate synthetic speech, and audio output means that can output the synthetic speech, the method comprising:

a storage step of storing in a storage means a list of IDs of external devices that are each located in a private space;

an acquisition step of acquiring, from an external device in which communication between the information service apparatus and the external device is in progress, the ID of the external device;

a determination step of determining whether or not the acquired ID of the external device is stored in the list of the storage means;

a control step of controlling said text-to-speech synthesis means to generate the synthetic speech and then output the generated synthetic speech to the audio output means if the determination step determines that the acquired ID of the external device is stored in the list, or controlling said display step to display the text information if the determination step determines that the acquired ID of the external device is not stored in the list;

a notification step of, when the synthetic speech generated by said text-to-speech synthesis means is to be output to the audio output device, or when the text information is to be output to the display means, notifying the user of the impending output; and

a superposing step of superposing the synthetic speech generated by said text-to-speech synthesis means and a sound different from the synthetic speech,

wherein, when the audio output device has already output the sound, said superposing step superposes the synthetic speech with the sound, and the audio output device outputs the sound superposed with the synthetic speech.